




Speech By
Dale Last

MEMBER FOR BURDEKIN

Record of Proceedings, 22 June 2022

MOTION

Youth Crime

 **Mr LAST** (Burdekin—LNP) (5.00 pm): I move—

That this House—

1. notes:
 - (a) the widespread community concern at the extent of juvenile criminal activity,
 - (b) the failure of existing laws to act as a deterrent to such activity, and
 - (c) over 53,400 petitioners, including the member for Capalaba acting in solidarity with his community, called for the reform of juvenile justice laws including breach of bail;
2. agrees to the introduction of reforms including an offence of breach of bail.

On Australia Day 2021, Kate Leadbetter, Matthew Field and their unborn child were killed by a juvenile offender in a stolen vehicle at Alexandra Hills. That incident was to become the lightning bolt for this state when we talk about juvenile crime. It also led to a petition—which as of today has been signed by no fewer than 53,400 petitioners—calling for the Attorney-General to appeal against the sentence imposed on the offender and to enact legislative change to curb juvenile crime, including reinstating breach of bail as an offence.

Juvenile crime continues to rage across this state. It continues to tear the heart out of our communities from the southern border to Cape York. This government might like to talk a big game when it comes to addressing juvenile crime, but those of us on this side know different. The statistics do not lie. In the 2020-21 year, 53 per cent of offenders for unlawful use of a motor vehicle were youth offenders aged 10 to 17. If we turn to the north of the state, in the year to May 2022, unlawful entry offences against juveniles in the Cairns local government area had more than doubled, and in four years unlawful use of a motor vehicle offences against juveniles in Cairns had more than doubled. Up the road in Mareeba, unlawful entry charges against juveniles are up 348 per cent over the last four years, property offences are up 282 per cent, and, wait for it, unlawful use of motor vehicle charges against juveniles have climbed a staggering 1,567 per cent.

The last 12 months have seen these juvenile offenders rampaging through Townsville yet again. Police statistics show robbery charges have almost doubled, property offence charges are up 184 per cent, unlawful use of motor vehicle charges are up 51 per cent and unlawful entry offences are up 57 per cent, yet those opposite would have us believe that it is all under control.

When we go through that petition, there is one particular name that stands out. I can tell the chamber here today what that name is: it is Don Brown, the member for Capalaba.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Kelly): Please use correct titles.

Mr LAST: It is the member for Capalaba. Why did the member for Capalaba sign that petition? He wanted to show that he was acting in solidarity with his community, and I can appreciate that. However, that puts the member for Capalaba in somewhat of a predicament here tonight, because by signing that petition he is now at odds with his own party. When it comes to reinstating breach of bail, he is now obviously supporting this side of the House.

The member for Capalaba has a decision to make tonight. He has talked the talk, but can he walk the walk across and vote with this side of the House when this motion is put at the end of this debate? Does the member for Capalaba have the integrity, does he have the ticker, to come across here and vote to show his solidarity for his community? We will wait and see, because it is easy to tell your community one thing but it is completely different to do something else in here. I suspect the member for Capalaba knows that, when it comes to addressing juvenile crime in this state, reinstating breach of bail would be a good start. He is now at odds with those on that side of the House.

If members want to know what this juvenile crime epidemic is doing, I will quote from an email I received today from a lady in Townsville who has had her car stolen twice in the last week. This is what she said—

We've experienced house break-ins by armed criminals while our family slept, business vandalism and property damage at the hands of these criminals, all while the system that is meant to ensure public safety, enables criminal behaviour instead.

The costs involved in re-keying our homes and business overnight, the costs of accessing our insurance and the ongoing costs of higher premiums all land with us.

...

Good, decent, hardworking people should not be held to ransom by a system that protects the criminals, not the public.

I could not agree more with that. It is time this government stepped up to the plate and addressed this issue and held these thugs to account for what they are doing in Queensland.